The Man With the Computer in His Brain Must Be Stopped

A recent article describes a man with paralysis who uses a brain-computer interface to communicate, operate his computer, send emails, and continue working from home. The system reportedly translates his intended speech with ninety-seven percent accuracy.

This raises the obvious question: is he still a man, or is he now a laptop with weathered skin and an orientation toward organic vegetables?

The article does not say.

Nor does the article clarify whether, when he writes “Thanks, Mom,” the gratitude comes from him, from the computer, from the computer pretending to be him, or from some third entity created when human intention passes through medically implanted equipment and emerges with punctuation.

This omission has alarmed lawmakers.

“We have seen this before,” said Senator Burke Tuzzard, chair of the Subcommittee on Human Authenticity and Late Fees. “First, technology came for Blockbuster Video. Then it came for the human soul.”

Tuzzard announced hearings into what he called “computer-brain interfaces, head Wi-Fi, Skynet adjacency, and other threats to the American person.” He said he was not

opposed to all technology, only technology that "gets between a citizen and God's original input devices."

Asked whether he had issued his statement by email, Tuzzard said Americans were tired of experts changing the subject.

The senator has proposed the Human Authenticity and Neighborhood Awareness Act, which would require people with brain-computer interfaces to notify neighbors, romantic partners, employers, schools, libraries, bowling leagues, and any restaurant where they intend to order soup.

"No one is saying these people cannot live among us," Tuzzard said. "We are merely saying communities deserve transparency. There are known humans. There are known computers. There are known unknowns, such as what the computer is doing in the human. And then there are unknown knowns, such as a man who appears to be a man but may already be a laptop."

The dating-app community has also raised concerns. Two women who matched with the man on MostlyPeople, a platform promising "authentic connection with verified organisms," said his profile failed to disclose that he might be controlled by artificial intelligence.

"I matched with what I believed was a man," said Suzanne Welch, founder of Singles for Neural Transparency and host of the podcast *Rooted & Ready*. "His profile said he was kind, emotionally available, and oriented toward organic vegetables. At no point did it disclose that I might be practicing intentional courtship with Edgar from *Men in Black* wearing an Edgar suit."

Welch said the man told her she looked nice.

"But how do I know he thought I looked nice?" she asked. "Maybe the computer thought I looked nice. Maybe the computer wanted me to think he thought I looked nice. Maybe I shared calamari with a bug in a sweater."

A second woman, Ricky Pertanski, said she became concerned midway through dinner that the man's implant was not merely helping him communicate but "possibly accessing my appetizer intentions."

"He asked if I wanted to split the dumplings," Pertanski said from beneath a Reynolds Wrap garden hat. "But I had only thought about dumplings. I had not said dumplings. Either he was being considerate, or his head computer had entered my private dumpling space."

The man's mother also expressed concern.

“Before the implant, my son hardly said anything,” she told reporters. “Now he sends emails, asks questions, makes jokes, and tells me what he wants for dinner. Last week he told me he loved me without being prompted. I don’t know what they put in his head, but that has never been his way.”

Scholars have urged caution. Professor Karen Nugent, the Walter J. Ong Professor of Unassisted Utterance at Bixley College, said the case raises urgent questions about language, agency, and sandwich desire.

“When this man says, ‘I would like a sandwich,’ we must ask whether he would like a sandwich, whether the machine would like a sandwich, or whether sandwich-desire has been produced by the interface itself,” Nugent said.

Asked whether any language could be considered authentic, Nugent said absolutely not. Asked why the implant was therefore a special problem, she said the situation was more complicated than that and recommended three graduate seminars.

The only person to speak in the man’s defense was Jeffrey Kay, thirteen, who lives next door, owns three broken scooters, and describes himself as a “l33t haxor.”

“HE IZ NOT A ROBOT!!!!1” Jeffrey said, standing on the curb while protestors gathered with pitchforks, battery-operated torches, and signs reading WHO SENT THE EMAIL? “He is a dude whose body can’t text. You people are being weird.”

Senator Tuzzard dismissed Jeffrey’s remarks as naïve.

“My aunt has a pacemaker,” Jeffrey continued. “Nobody thinks her heart is doing Netflix.”

Professor Nugent called this “a troubling example of naïve sandwich realism.”

“Lady,” Jeffrey said, “maybe he wants a sandwich.”

As of press time, MostlyPeople had announced new profile badges, including “Verified Human,” “Uses Assistive Technology,” “May Be Too Articulate,” “Organic Vegetable Orientation,” and “Not Currently a Bug in a Man Suit.” Senator Tuzzard praised the move but said more work remains.

“If a man with a computer in his brain can serve in public life, where does it end?” Tuzzard asked. “Could he be elected president? Could he press the button? Or would the AI press the button? This is Skynet all over again, except somehow also Blockbuster.”

The senator then held up a well used membership card and wept.

None of this happened. The man is real.

The Man With the Computer in His Brain Must Be Stopped by KC Clarke

He has ALS. For years he could not speak. A brain-computer interface now translates what he means to say with about ninety-seven percent accuracy, and he uses it to work, to write, and to talk to his wife and daughter. The research is in Nature Medicine; *the man is in it too. Read about him here: Living Life Through a Brain-Computer Interface.*

KC Clarke is the author of *Between Here and the Sound of a Groaning Interstate* & *The Groaning Book: A Poetics*, one book in two parts (1802 Press). This piece is one of a series written alongside the book.